

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS TAIPEI 003931

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -
ROBERT PALLADINO
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

A) "Don't Throw Away the Shoulder Pole Before Buying a Lottery Ticket - Excessive Manipulation of the 'Name Change' Plan Might End up in Gaining Nothing [for Taiwan]"

The conservative, pro-unification "United Daily News" editorialized (12/10):

" . Americans will not sit back quietly and allow Beijing to use force [against Taiwan.] Yes, this is true, but this fact cannot be viewed as an amulet for Taiwan because how China and the United States will act is not under Taiwan's control. What Taiwan can control is how the island will choose its future. For a long time, Taiwan's tough survival has relied on the fact that Washington, Beijing and Taipei all recognize [the need to] 'maintain the status quo.' Because of this, Taiwan got the United States' guarantee to safeguard peace across the Taiwan Strait .. This 'U.S. lottery ticket' that Taiwan uses as an amulet, however, cannot be cashed in at anytime without restrictions. Instead, it depends on the means that Taiwan uses for making a living - namely, [its pledge of] 'not to unilaterally change the status quo.' President Chen Shui-bian, however, seems to have a blind spot regarding the recognition of this situation, and his move to throw away the 'shoulder pole' . is so blatant, [it is almost] as if he were afraid that the world would not notice his intention. Doesn't he know that the number on the 'U.S. lottery ticket' cannot be erased or changed, and the ticket has never been a blank check? . "

B) "Chen Unfairly Accuses of U.S. Interfering in Internal Affairs"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said in an editorial (12/10):

" . Chen attacked the U.S. government's objections to his name-change call as an action of interfering with Taiwan's internal affairs. This accusation is neither reasonable nor fair. The U.S. has a responsibility to intervene when necessary, because it has a defense commitment to Taiwan. This commitment must not be interpreted as merely a unilateral U.S. obligation. Taiwan, for its part, should behave itself by refraining from doing anything that would provoke a PRC invasion that in turn could involve Washington in an unnecessary war. In other words, Taiwan must not take the advantage of America's defense protection to antagonize Beijing by pursuing independence.

"Chen of course can voice his resistance aloud to Washington's intervention if he believes that Taiwan is no longer in need of American defense assistance. Apparently, this is unlikely to be the case as long as the political standoff with Beijing persists.

"It was irresponsible that Chen urged the people to persevere with his name-change plan and told them that that was the only right way for them to take. And only by doing so will Taiwan have future.

"Taiwan's political future cannot be unilaterally decided by its own politicians or by a referendum by its people. It must take into account the position of Beijing which will always claims sovereignty over Taiwan. Taipei could ignore Beijing's opposition only under the circumstance when it has the strength to independently deter a military retaliation. . "

"A continuous rise in nationalism on both sides of the Taiwan Strait may finally prompt their political leaders to take adventurous moves, to the point that things may get out of control. When tensions escalate to such a level, it would be too late for the U.S. to intervene and prevent what could be a devastating war.

"This means that Washington might have to take a more effective role in helping to contain Taiwan's surging

independence movement now and in the years ahead."

PAAL